WHO WE ARE

As the years pass, memories of my parents and family become more and more precious. On different occasions, incidents have evoked memories which have led me to say, "Oh, that reminds me of...," and listeners, often some of you, have remarked, "Why don't you put that into writing? That is something I would like my children to know." Memories serve to inspire us and to sustain us—in good times and in less than happy times. Dostoevski said this very well when he wrote:

> You must know there is nothing higher and stronger, more wholesome and good for life than some memory, especially a memory of childhood. People talk to you a great deal about your education, but some sacred memory, preserved from childhood is perhaps the best education. If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is sage to the end of his days. And if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may be the means of saving us.

So it is that in the pages which follow I will share with you memories of our family through several generations--memories which I hope will give you, as they have given me, appreciation for the loving, caring, brave, strong people who were our forebears.

Much of the history of the Stephen Kremer family came through conversations in 1953 with "Auntie" (Sophia M. Kremer, sister of Eugene), then 83, and was recorded as she spoke. Some years later (1974) this same material was read to Clarisse Michels (Auntie's niece, my cousin) for any additional details she might be able to supply. Clarisse found Auntie's recollection of family history to be identical with that she had heard through her parents, Henry and Justine Olinger.

An important source of information on the Kremer family's life in America came through diaries written by Auntie. The first such diary we now have was written in 1905; it is very likely she had kept diaries during earlier years. Her diary keeping was continued throughout her life. The last entries were made only a few days before her death. Not all the diaries were preserved, but there is a sufficient number to give many insights into the quality of the living and the character of the family. Auntie's amazing record of the events of her life time is explained in

large measure as one reads the details of daily living as she recorded it.

Information about the Charles Wagner family (mother's father) came from my mother who always spoke of her family with pride and affection. In her eighties, the tears often came when she spoke of her mother and a sister Mary for whom she had cared during a long illness.

Sylvia Kremer, granddaughter of Anna and Charles Wagner and niece of my mother, Elizabeth Wagner Kremer, supplied information she had gained from church records and through conversations with several persons in Lesterville, South Dakota,who had known the Charles Kremer family when they resided in that area.

The difficulty I have experienced in obtaining and verifying information causes me to make this suggestion. Family records, pictures, letters, documents and newspaper clippings are the stuff from which history is reconstructed. Care is needed in recording, dating, and preserving this material if it is to be the history of the future. It is my hope that this volume will serve as a beginning for the family history you will write. The time spent in preparation of this booklet has been a deeply satisfying experience,for it has made a happy past live again. May you have the same experience.

Josephine Kramer
August 1978

PATERNAL BRANCH

KREMER

FIRST GENERATION

STEPHEN ETIENNE KREMER and MARGUERITE LIMPACH

This account of the Stephen Etienne Kremer family was dictated to me in 1953 by Sophia M. Kremer who, without reference to any printed material, gave names, dates and incidents. She was then eighty-three.

The Kremer Family in Luxembourg and Belgium

Stephen Kremer of Koerich, Luxembourg, and Marguerite Limpach of Sterpenich, Belgium, were married in June of 1852. They lived on the home place at Koerich, property which had been in the Kremer family for years. They were ambitious, hardworking people. Here five children were born (1852-1861): Justine, Nicholas, Marguerite, Hubert and Michael. In 1862 the family moved to Attert, Belgium, to live on a rented estate. While they were there, the house and barns at Koerich were destroyed by fire. Virginia and Eugene were born at Attert.

In 1867 the family moved to a baron's estate at Ell. The house had once served as a fort, the strongest in the country outside the city of Luxembourg. The depth of the window sills was four feet. While they were at Ell, the last of the children, Sophia, was born in 1870. The mother, who appears to have been an especially capable and vital person, died of pneumonia on April 14, 1874. She was buried at Ell where, a few years later, a church was erected over her grave. In 1875 the family returned to Koerich where new buildings had been erected after the fire.

An Important Decision

The mother's death was a great tragedy for the family in many ways, but particularly to the father who, from that time on, seems to have lost his once driving ambition and zest for living. A whole series of financial misfortunes overtook the family--the loss of the old family home and barns by fire, the loss of livestock through disease. The father seemed indifferent to the need for drastic measures to improve the family situation. It was Justine and Michael who felt the only solution to the family's problems was to emigrate to America.

There was encouragement to make this move from cousins, the Hilgerts (Mary Limpach Hilgert) who had emigrated to Maryville, Missouri, in 1869. Letters from the Hilgerts told of the availability of rich farm lands in central United States. Henry Olinger, the girlhood sweetheart of Justine

Kremer, had gone to this area in 1877. He and Justine had become engaged previous to his leaving Koerich. Then, too, Nick (21 years of age) and Hubert (19), had gone to Maryville, Missouri in 1876, where during the winter they worked on farms for five dollars a month, and, during the summer on the railroads for one dollar a day. By 1878 Nick had saved two hundred dollars which he made available for family use. The brothers were eager to have the family join them.

Mike and Justine began to plan seriously for the move to America, but the father, Stephen Etienne, withheld his consent to accompany them. They discussed their plans with an uncle, Nicholas Limpach of Brussels, who advised them to proceed without the father's approval.

Accordingly, an auction sale was held to raise money for passage, personal belongings were packed, and the family were on their way to Sterpenich for a visit with relatives before the scheduled departure from Antwerp. Among the possessions they took from the old home were many yards of hand woven linens which in later years were the materials for hand embroidered blouses for nieces, shirts for men, scarves for dressers, and other decorative pieces.

On the day of the family's departure from Koerich, Stephen Etienne, who had as yet not given any indication of his intention to accompany the family, took his walking stick and disappeared. Later it was learned that he had spent several days walking through the countryside saying goodbye to his friends. Shortly before the decision was made to come to America, Stephen Etienne had been elected to a town office, an honor which he did not accept. When the family arrived in Sterpenich, he appeared and announced that he was ready to accompany the family to the new home. From this time on, it was Nick and Mike who assumed responsibility for the family. Stephen Etienne had the love, respect and devotion of his children always, but it was they who now made plans and decisions.

Before their departure, the family traveled to Nancy, France, for their farewell to Sister Clarisse, who had chosen to remain with her community, although she had received permission to accompany her family. She served as a teacher in the community of Sisters of Christian Doctrine from her admission to the order in 1873 until her death in 1902.

The family sailed from Antwerp and arrived in Maryville, Missouri, on

August 17, 1878. The trip across the Atlantic was uneventful.

The Years in Missouri

The family was welcomed in Maryville by their Hilgert cousins, who immediately borrowed money from them---repaid eventually, but over the years and in small amounts. A farm of eight acres twenty miles southeast of Maryville was purchased. In the period from 1878-1883, the Kremers enjoyed little success in their farming. Heavy rains and flooding damaged the crops repeatedly.

It was at this time that Michael went to Montana with friends and spent one year as a sheepherder. Eugene became a delivery boy in the meat market owned by a Hilgert cousin. From this early experience he became interested in the meat business which he followed his entire life.

In November, 1878, Justine married Henry Olinger. The young couple settled on a farm in the same vicinity as the Kremers. Later, the farm which they purchased became the site of the town of Parnell. Here their first son Andrew, who lived but a short time, was born, and on April 6, 1884, their son Edward.

The Move to Iowa

In 1884, after several years of poor crops, caused for the most part by spring floods, the family sought a new location, this time an area northeast of Alton, Iowa. After spring planting, Nick, Eugene and Hubert, with a wagon and two teams of horses drove through South Dakota to Pierre to view the country. They lived a happy outdoor life on the prairie, hunting, sleeping in their wagon or taking shelter in the homes of hospitable pioneer Dakota farmers. They returned from this happy adventure in time for the harvest. In the winter that followed, the Kremer home was overflowing with relatives and guests: Peter Kremer, a cousin from Luxembourg to settle in Wilmont, Minnesota; Carl Wagener, a friend of Eugene's, later to marry Virginia Kremer; and E. Milchen, another friend from Luxembourg, were among the many who came, went, stayed.

Always in search of better land (and ironically, to avoid the floods which seemed to follow them), the Kremers made yet another move in 1885, this time to the Peter Hanson farm in the Alton area. Here they remained until 1888 when they left for Dakota territory.

The "Wild" West

In the fall of 1884, Hubert returned to Maryville where he had a narrow escape from a tragic death. A desperado, Omaha Charlie, was at large in Missouri. One day he entered the Hilgert tavern with the idea of shooting Michael Hilgert. Unfortunately, Hubert, whom he had never seen, was in the path ;of the bullet and was shot in the chest. The bullet was never removed and there was no permanent injury.

A crowd gathered at the jail to which Omaha Charlie was taken. The jailer was overpowered and the prisoner was taken by the angry crowd to be lynched. On the way to lynching, Carl Wagener stepped too close to view this bad character and was bitten by him. The injury to his hand resulted in a serious case of blood poisoning. Carl's recovery from the infection was slow but had fortunate consequences. While recovering, he went with Eugene to spend some time with family at Alton. Undoubtedly his friendship with Virginia had opportunity to deepen. Virginia and Carl were married on October 19, 1886.

Weddings, Births, Deaths, Blizzards
(Iowa Years)

In 1886 Hubert married Susan Arens of Alton. The young couple moved to a farm near Hospers, Iowa, where they remained until Susan's death in January of 1887. Hubert returned to the family home where he lived for most of his remaining years. On July 15, 1907, he took a claim to land in Pennington County and lived for eight months near Grindstone. He received title to the land on April 27, 1908.

Virginia Kremer and Carl Wagener were married at Alton in 1886. They then moved to Sioux City, Iowa, where Carl was employed in a meat market. Their wedding picture shows Carl and Virginia to have been a very ;handsome couple. Virginia's was a very beautiful brown taffeta dress. Both asked to be and were buried in their wedding attire.

In the fall of 1886, Henry and Justine Olinger with their small son Eddie, came to live with the Kremers and remained with them until March 1, 1888. In June of 1887 their son Ferdinand was born in the Kremer home. As one follows events recorded in Auntie"s diaries, there comes the realization that the Kremer home over the years served as a refuge and source

of unparalleled hospitality for relatives and friends who came, went, and remained for a few days or even years! A cousin, John Pierre Mertz, came in 1888 and remained until 1893 when he left to make his home in Oregon! A chance selection of a few entries in one of the diaries shows that in a period of three successive days eighteen visitors were in the home, fourteen of them for meals!

The Blizzard of '88

In spring there were the floods, in the winter blizzards--one of the worst on January 12, 1888. This severe storm, one of the worst on record, covered much of South Dakota and northwest Iowa. Great winds blew enormous drifts, smothering livestock and causing travelers to lose their way. Many lost their sense of direction in moving about their own farm yards and froze to death. There was a heavy toll in lost lives. The Kremers suffered only small damage.

The "Home Place"

In the spring of 1888, the Kremers, with their cousin John Pierre Mertz, moved to Alexandria, South Dakota, and for a year rented land near that town. At the same time the Olingers rented land north of Alexandria. One year later the James Steichen homestead, Section 15 Pleasant Township, near Emery was purchased for ten dollars an acre and became the Kremer "home place." The Olingers purchased land in an adjoining section.

Now, with hours of toil, great thrift, sacrifice, and good management, the upswing in family fortunes for the Kremers began. In the years that were to follow, steady growth in financial gains occurred. Auntie liked to tell the story that in the first years on the "home place" she wanted a new dining room table. When she made this request to Uncle Nick, he said, "If you buy a table now, Sophia, at the end of this year you will have a table, but if you use the money to buy a cow, at the end of the year you will have a cow and a calf." The table was years in the getting. A similar tale was of the underwear that had been patched until Auntie had to say to Uncle Nick, "There is nothing left but patches," to which he replied, "Then patch the patches."

While the Kremers were settling at Emery, Hubert remained in Iowa. Eugene worked at a packing plant in Sioux City. In July of 1888 the

Wagener family--Carl, Virginia, and infant daughter Sophia--came to Emery to remain until after the birth of Herman on March 24, 1889.

In the fall Mike, Eugene, John Pierre, and Carl Wagener returned to Iowa to thresh. Mike had previously purchased a thresing machine which he had left in Iowa with the John Goeders, friends of long standing. The relatives--Mike, Eugene, John Pierre and Carl--were a substantial part of the threshing crew which moved from farm to farm for "contract" threshing. At the close of the season this same crew returned to South Dakota, and set to work remodeling the house on the home place. This work was completed the last week of January, 1889, and on February 2 the first visitors in the new home, Mr. and Mrs. Reichling, were received. Mr. Reichling was an old friend from Luxembourg.

The Kremers Become Successful Cattlemen

The year 1894 brought a severe drouth with hot winds. There was no crop and farmers were forced to sell their livestock for lack of feed. Nick and Mike bought over a hundred head of cattle and drove them to Wilmont, Minnesota, where feed was abundant. During the hard winter, Mike herded the cattle in open country. In early May he drove them home. It was with the sale of these cattle that the Kremers--Nick, Mike, and Sophia--had their first financial success.

In the years that followed, they extended their cattle and hog feeding operations with great success. They acquired 680 acres of land adjoining the home place. Uncle Nick was known throughout the area as an excellent grain and livestock producer. Auntie's diaries substantiate this characterization with the facts on grain production in the years 1898, 1905, 1906.

1898		1905		1906	
Wheat	3212 bushels	Wheat	2380 bushels	Wheat	1890 bushels
Oats	550 "	Oats	1050 "	Oats	740 "
Rye	206 "	Barley	300 "	Barley	415 "

The amount of land under cultivation in these years is unknown. In 1898 the yield must have come from 160 acres.

Auntie produced a healthy part of the family income through her sale of eggs, milk and cream. She received premium prices for her butter which was shipped to New York markets. Her income from butter and eggs was more than sufficient to care for family groceries and clothing. There was usually

a margin to cover yards of cotton and woolen goods which she used in making pretty dresses, skirts, and blouses for herself, her nieces and other fortunate ones. Her busy hands embroidered dozens of pillowcases, towels, sheets and blouses. She knit hundreds and hundreds of pairs of socks. Again in the diaries there are many entries such as the following:

Today I made 2 shirts for father and two pair of pillowcases.

Clarisse was here and we made her a dress. Started on a summer dress.

Worked on my fan quilt and made a calico skirt.

I made 2 pair of pillowcases and 6 kitchen aprons.

Justine and I made 2 quilts and I took a music lesson. (Next day)

Today they put in the telephone. (June 5, 1906)

We finished 4 quilts for Sophia Wagner. (June 7, 1906)

In 1902, Michael returned to Nancy, France, to spend the summer with Sister Clarisse, who was in failing health, and to visit relatives. In the fall he returned loaded with gifts for nieces and nephews. For years his nieces wore lovely woolen plaids which he had purchased on this trip. Sister Clarisse passed away April 9, 1902, and was buried in the family plot of the Limpach's in Sterpenich, Belgium. It was a comfort to the family that a cousin who had been close to Sister Clarisse through the years could care for her in their absence. Family pictures taken in 1902 were made especially for Uncle Mike to take to Sister Clarisse. Reproductions are included in this volume.

St. Stephen's Day

The Kremers observed holidays with "feasts" of good eating, and no day received more attention than St. Stephen's Day. It was the custom of the Luxembourgers to observe one's name day rather than the birthday. So with grandfather it was St. Stephen's Day that was his day of celebration--and a big day it was among the Kremers. Festivities began on the previous evening when neighbors and relatives from miles around began to arrive with their good food and good wishes. Jellied chicken, home cured sausages and ham, beautiful bread, rolls, cookies and pies came in quantity. There were "ponies" of beer which added to the liveliness of conversation and dancing, the music for which was supplied by a local violinist--Eddie Olinger, the

grandson. Grandfather had a wide circle of friends; he was popular with young and old. One never- to-be-broken rule in the Kremer household was: "Show respect for the old." Grandfather enjoyed both respect and great affection in his household.

One entry from Auntie's diaries speaks of preparations for Christmas. It reads: "Today we dressed 15 chickens, a goose and later made cookies for Christmas."

The Decision to Leave the Home Place

For a period of years Auntie suffered from "rheumatism." Years later abcessed teeth were discovered to have been the source of infection. It became difficult for her to take care of her household duties. For this reason the family decided to leave the farm on March 1, 1907. A successful auction sale was held after which the family left for Parker, South Dakota. Andrew Brucker and sons took over the farm, but Uncle Nick remained to feed the cattle and hogs, haul the grain to market, and give general supervision for the next several years. The family lived in the Wagener home from March to October, and then purchased the Melvin home. During this time Eugene and Mike were in the meat business together.

On the evening of November 21, 1907, Grandfather Kremer became ill suddenly and without warning. He had fed the chickens, brought in the coal, and had his supper as usual. At eight o'clock he suffered a stroke of apoplexy and died at two o'clock Saturday morning. He was buried in St. Martin's Cemetery at Emery. Local papers carried these statements in his obituaries:

> The deceased lived a consecrated Christian life and was a most loving and devoted father. To the sorrowing ones we extend our sympathy, and especially to the daughter Miss Sophia, who, since her mother's death has been the constant attendant and companion of her father. May they all find comfort in knowing that their father has passed into a richer and more glorious life.

> The funeral was held in the Catholic church in this city on Saturday forenoon last, Rev. Father Monaghan officiating. These services were well attended. Then the remains were taken to Emery, where, on Monday last, another funersl service was held, that his many friends and former neighbors might have opportunity to pay the last token of respect to one they had so highly respected through long acquaintance. At this service Rev. Father Hoffman officiated, assisted

by Fathers Berkle and Aur. His remains were interred there in St. Martin's Cemetery, and they were followed to their last resting place by one of the largest bodies of mourners ever assembled in Hanson County.

PATERNAL BRANCH

KREMER

SECOND, THIRD GENERATION

NICK, MIKE, SOPHIA

These names have often been spoken and used as one; and in a very special way the owners of those names thought of themselves as one. Trulyl their motto could have been: "All for one, and one for all." They were alike in their devotion to their father and family, in their attachment to their Catholic faith, in their concern for the welfare of others, in the fierce energies they brought to the task of achieving financial independence, in their forthrightness and honesty, and in their simple unpretentious life style.

Yet they were different.

Nicholas

Nicholas was the one of whom the neighbors said, "He is on the job 365 days of the year," whose skill in stacking grain secure from the ravages of wind and rain evoked this comment from my brother Ed, then a small boy who spent much time on the farm: "No one can build stacks like our Nicky." He was honest yet shrewd in his business dealings, always able to get the most for his dollar.

After retiring from active work on the farm, he continued to supervise the operations of the renters whose work he followed closely. In his later years his time was given almost completely to church activities, prayer and charities.

He attended daily Mass for forty years with very few exceptions. He was active in the Holy Name Society from 1914-1940 and a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus; a Sioux Falls council carries his name. He visited the sick in the hospital and in their homes, was especially concerned for aged and ill priests, and cared for countless poor.

Michael

Uncle Mike was tall, broad shouldered, powerfully built with a heart larger than his great stature. His tenderness to children, to adults in trouble, in fact to all of God's creatures was in like proportions. Uncle Mike was the one who was sought out by all in trouble, and few there were who ever came who did not receive help and encouragement. His charities were unknown to most. He was completely selfless and totally generous, much beloved in his family, great in his goodness.

Not all was seriousness and sadness with him. In his youth he was a great hunter and loved the outdoor life. As an older man he was an inveterate card player and spent many hours at the fire station and Elks Club with friends at this pastime.

He never married. The family of Sophia, Nick, and grandfather defied romance.

Sophia

It is difficult if not impossible to assess the extent of "Auntie's" influence within the Kremer family from her early girlhood until her death. Her word was law. In many ways her life style was apparent in her card playing. She loved a game and was an excellent player--sharp, quick, aggressive, competitive, able to laugh heartily in the good going, sensitive over reverses, and determined to overcome! She reached out with help, advice, criticism, support in ways that touched the lives of each and every member of the family.

Sophia was active in her church, in social and religious activities; she was treasurer for the altar society and in her thirty years in that office had only one imbalance of one cent. She was a member of the hospital auxiliary for the same period and was active in the sewing guild where she took particular pleasure in making and mending the sisters' habits.

The number in attendance at her funeral services--old, young, rich and poor--was testimony to the respect she had earned in the community. With her, family was the beginning and end of life's purpose. Her devotion to the Kremer family--first her father, then sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews--and to her church was apparent throughout her life and in her bequests at her death.

HUBERT

Those of us who knew Uncle Hubert remember him vividly, for he had some very special characteristics. He was mysterious; he wore an artificial leg which caused him to walk with a bit of lameness. The creaking of the mechanical joints and the thump of that heavy limb made him an unusual figure to an imaginative youngster. A heel blister which did not respond to treatment had necessitated the amputation. Several surgeries were required before the wound healed and a satisfactory fitting of a leg could be made.

While sharing "historical data" with me, Auntie spoke with much feeling of Hubert's always patient suffering through many trials--the loss of his young wife, his several serious accidents, and many illnesses. He was uncomplaining and chose to add a bit of light heartedness to those in his company with his story telling and amusing anecdotes. He had learned French as a school boy and loved to entertain us with French expressions and with the singing of French songs, particularly the "Marseilles" which he rendered in a pleasing baritone.

Most of his years he spent in the family home, giving assistance wherever and whenever he could, both inside and outside the home. He spent much of one year in our family home and I remember well my mother's preparation of breakfast trays which one of us carried to Uncle Hubert's room. He was always a late riser. Like all the Kremers, he enjoyed cards and played with much skill.

He was tall and well built, dark in coloring, fine featured, a good looking man. Of all the uncles, I remember him as the one with the greatest interest in reading, perhaps because his health deterred him from activities demanding physical strength which he did not have.

JUSTINE AND HENRY OLINGER

Justine, eldest child in the Stephen Etienne Kremer family, became a second mother to the children in the family after their mother's death. For as long as she lived, her brothers and sisters sought her advice and counsel and gave her the greatest respect. She was a modest, uncomplaining, unassuming person of whom my own mother said, "She never spoke an ill word of anyone." My father said she was the best cook in the world because she could make something very good out of nothing. Elsewhere in this narrative mention is made of her marriage to Henry Olinger shortly after the family's arrival in Missouri. The Olingers represented the ultimate in thrift, hard work, and good management as a farm family.

The Olinger farm home was a wonderful place to visit--so clean that the cleanliness had a fragrance. There were always white sour cream cookies in a jar on the ledge of the stairway leading to the cellar. That cellar was a model of cleanliness with hanging shelves to hold crocks of cream and butter. The mild room had glistening white-washed stone walls, a floor of cool, moist sand, and the best air-conditioning ever from the brezes which entered the milk room by way of Aunt Justine's flower garden immediately outside the cellar windows. Her butter was judged to be near perfection.

Aunt Justine's flower garden deserves comment. The plants spoke of her deeply religious nature. There was "Angel Wing," a lovely pink begonia; "A Crown of Thorns," a heavily stemmed plant with long, sharp thorns fashioned into a crown; "Wandering Jew," a trailing vine with a small blue flower; and foliage plants sufficient to make a Joseph's coat. In the spare bedroom, Aunt Justine had her shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary, often adorned with flowers from her garden. Auntie spoke of the many times she found Aunt Justine on her knees in prayer when she came to the Olinger home unexpectedly.

Only many years after my Uncle Henry Olinger's death did I learn why he wore earrings--thin golden loops. His daughter Clarisse knew the secret. "He believed they would keep his eyes and vision strong." He never wore glasses. Not only was Uncle Henry a successful, hardworking farmer, but for many years he was choir director of St. Martin's Church in Emery. His choir members were his sons, Ed and Ferdie, and daughter Clarisse, whom he

directed in a very professional way as they sang the German and Latin liturgies and hymns. As an elderly lady of eighty-four, Clarisse could still sing a Christmas carol she had been taught by her father, one line of which was, "Ein kindt geboren zu Betlaham, Alleluia, Alleluia."

CLARISSE M. MICHELS

Clarisse, the fourth child of Justine Kremer Olinger and Henry Olinger, was born at Emery, South Dakota, December 8, 1889, and has lived there her entire life. She was given the name Clarisse for her mother's sister Marguerite (Sister Clarisse). As a young girl, before and after school days, she assisted her parents in the house and in the fields. Clarisse has many traits which mark her as an unusually strong and capable person, not the least of which is her seemingly limitless capacity for work. If there was work to do, Clarisse was there to see that it was done.

In Auntie's diaries, written while she was on the "home place" at Emery, there are frequent entries which tell of Clarisse's many visits to give Auntie assistance. The following are typical:

> Clarisse was here to help wash and iron.
>
> Clarisse came to wash and bake.
>
> Clarisse was here for the day. We went to J. Kaiser for eggs. I made her a shirtwaist and myself a pink dressing sack. Later I planted the garden.
>
> I was sick all day but Clarisse was here.
>
> Clarisse and I baked cakes, pies, made turkey dressing and potato salad. In the evening we went to the entertainment in Emery.
>
> Justine and Clarisse were here. We sewed shirts, kimonos, and finished a quilt.

Usually Clarisse walked to and from the Kremer's, a round trip of three miles. If she went for the day, she knew that there was work to be done after she arrived home, usually six or seven cows to be milked. During spring work, Clarisse often followed up Ed or Ferdie's plowing with the harrow, which required the management of two teams. Haying was a happier, easier time, even if it did involve driving the team for the hay rake or stacking the hay. Clarisse has been a busy person always--in the field, in the house, or in the homes of family or friends.

With all the work there were many pleasures. In the Kremer household there was first an organ and later a piano. Both Auntie and Clarisse took lessons; the teacher, Lena Krier, came to the Kremer home for the instruc-

tions. The Olingers--Ed, Ferdie and Clarisse--all played musical instruments: Ferdie, the bass; Ed, the fiddle; and Clarisse, the organ. They organized a trio and were available in the community for country dances. The organ was carried to a hay loft or granary or wherever the dance was to be held, the Olingers tuned up, and the dancers swung into action. For their evening's work, the trio was paid five dollars. Auntie's diaries suggest that in the early 1900's there was a very considerable amount of quilting, visiting, sewing--social occasions that gave Clarisse and others welcome respites from long hours of hard physical work.

After her marriage to William Michels, Clarisse continued her generous giving of self to her husband and family to help them achieve success in their careers as farmers and in business. All this was realized through years of drouth and dust, family illness and tragedies. She cared for her mother through a long illness, and for her sister-in-law, Mary Olinger, after whose death she assumed many responsibilities for the care of the family. Her husband William Michels passed away in 1954. During the illnesses of her daughter-in-law Marnie, and the tragic illness and death of her son Ronald, she and her daughter Mae often cared for the children in the Michels' home.

Three wars have brought great tragedies to Clarisse. Her brother Ferdie was a victim of shell shock in World War I. Her son Ronald, First Lieutenant Bombardier in the Air Force in World War II, suffered a head injury that later caused his death. Her grandson, Michael Michels, First Lieutenant in an armored division, lost his life in battle in the Vietnam War.

Through joy and sorrow--and there has been much of both in Clarisse's life--her deep faith has sustained her. She has been a daily attendant at Mass for forty years. Her sense of humor has been ever present. Whatever the situation, she has shown an amazing ability to carry on. At eighty-five she still continues her beautiful handiwork in doing for others--making attractive baby quilts for the new arrivals among relatives and friends, and knitting for the Veterans' Hospitals. Countless persons have been recipients of Clarisse's generosity, thoughtfulness and kindness. Some of her famous recipes are included in a special section of this book. Clarisse typifies the strengths of the best of the Kremers and Olingers.

VIRGINIA AND CARL WAGENER

Without exception, all of the Kremers had a good sense of humor, but no one had a more hearty laugh and a merrier twinkle in the eye than Virginia Kremer Wagener. Many facts relating to the marriage of Virginia and Carl Wagener and the births of several of their children can be found in the story of Stephen Etienne. This can be added.

In 1908, Carl bought the meat market in Parker, South Dakota, operated by Eugene and Mike. From that time on, Virginia and Carl shared the work in the market. Virginia could carry a quarter of beef from the "ice box" to the block and process it there with an expertise not to be surpassed.

Though deeply involved in business, she maintained an attractive home and set a generous and delectable table. It was routine with her to rise early and have doughnuts ready to serve at breakfast. And such doughnuts! The ingredients were poured into the mixing bowl without accurate measurement, but the results were always the same---tender, delicious doughnuts.

Uncle Carl was rather severe in appearance and aloof in manner; he never lost the erect, military carriage acquired in the German army. He had deep loyalties to his relatives who remained in Germany and whom he visited after World War II. He was an avid sportsman.

The Wageners, like the Kremers, were uncommonly solicitous about the welfare of their children. Their goal was to ensure a secure and happy future for them.

Aunt Virginia was a beautiful young girl. As an older woman she gained weight, but remained attractive. For years she was a faithful choir member of St. Christina's Church in Parker. She passed away from a heart attack in August of 1921. Uncle Carl lived for a number of years with his daughter Philomena before his death in .

EUGENE GEORGE KREMER

(1868-1942)

Eugene George (father of Edward, Leo, Lawrence, Agnes, Sophia, Josephine and Dorothy) was ten years old when his family left their home in Luxembourg. His education was limited to his years in school there. Within a few years he was very much on his own, returning at intervals to be with his family.

He was a "family man," close to his wife and children, and close to his brothers and sisters to whom he turned often and from whom he received much financial assistance. In retrospect, I question the wisdom of that generosity and consider how different my father's life might have been had he been helped early in his life to develop a strong sense of responsibility for his obligations. He had a quick and active mind, possessed an engaging personality, had a great capacity for work, and was genuinely interested in people--all of which could very well have made him the most successful member of this capable, hardworking family.

As a man he was powerfully built and undoubtedly seemed older than his years when in his teens. After working as a delivery boy for his cousins Hilgert, who were in the meat business in Maryville, Missouri, he went to Sioux City where he was employed in a packing house. For a brief time he traveled with a circus, cutting meat in the kitchen and driving horses for the large vans. In later years he related this experience. During an electrical and wind storm, the wild animals panicked and seemed about to break from their cages. Their screams and roars terrified him; he left the next day to follow a less colorful but more enjoyable life.

During the time he worked in Sioux City, he met C.A. Wagener, who later married his sister Virginia. These two men were friends for years and at one time operated a meat market in Parker, South Dakota. In the first years of this operation, Eugene would rise long before daybreak and, if necessary, carry through the complete process of preparing meat for sale, to deliver by horse and wagon to the farmers throughout the countryside. He worked in the meat business, owning and operating several markets, until he retured in 1938.

For most of his life he engaged in hard physical work. Even so he found time for hunting and fishing, picnicking with the family, and attending ball games. For years he was an ardent supporter of the Chicago Cubs. He loved flowers and had the proverbial green thumb. He was a connoisseur of good food and mother gave him credit for the suggestions he made in preparation of some unusual dishes with fish, lobster, crab, oysters and wild game. He had a strong artistic bent a nd with training might have done some remarkable things. He made numerous trips to Chicago and Sioux City to take lifestock, and came home with hats, coats, materials for dresses which always pleased, fit, and were in good taste. For special occasions he decorated the meat and the walls of his market most attractively. On display always were many mounted specimens from his hunting trips. He liked to discuss political issues and had very definite opinions and convictions in such matters. He was a confirmed Democrat and often told how he was paid one dollar for his first vote.

His disposition made him popular wherever he went;he was cheerful and conversational with a great sense of humor. He had talent for story telling and could keep both adults and children entranced with his tales. He was ever ready to give a helping hand, particularly in times of sickness and death. No effort and no sacrifice were too great for him if in any way he could help his children make their lives happier. During the last three years of his life, he and mother lived with me in Austin. He was not well but kept his happy disposition and added much pleasure to all who came to or were in the home. His grandson, William Gotz, then a small boy of six or seven, gave untold pleasure to my father, who was his boon companion. At his death, the thought flashed through my mind: "You have lost the best friend you ever had." Thirty years later that conviction is as real as it was then.

To his grandchildren and great grandchildren Eugene Kremer might well serve as a model of generosity to and respect for his fellowmen, irrespective of color, creed or status.

DOC AND SOPHIA--THE FORMANACKS

This section of family history would be incomplete if it did not tell of "Doc" Formanack and his wife, my cousin Sophia, my godparents. George J. Formanack was a gentleman of character--kind, soft spoken and generous with his professional talents to all members of the family. He was a thoroughly good person. In him there was no pettiness nor selfishness. He was refined in his tastes and manners. I am sure my brother Leo, who became a dentist, was motivated to do so because of his association with this splendid man.

Sophia Wagener, the eldest niece in the Kremer family, was an attractive, dark-eyed, capable girl who was a great favorite of Auntie, with whom she spent much time. In Auntie's diaries one finds notations over and over again of Sophia's visits to the Kremer home. One can but conclude that in many respects Sophia's role was much like that of a younger sister to her. Sophia II had a lovely soprano voice and for years sang with the church choir. With her children, she moved to Mitchell in 1920 and, for most of the remaining years, was very much a part of the Kremer home. In the last years of her life, she was with her daughter Irma and son-in-law Joe Dickson, who gave her devoted care during a long illness.

Every memory I have of this fine woman confirms the belief that she was an exceptional person. She was one who held no malice toward any person and who during her entire life strove to bring peace, harmony, happiness and good will to the family. She lived her religious convictions which were deep, strong and constant.

Sophia and Doc maintained an attractive home where gracious hospitality was extended to the many who came there. Doc Formanack's untimely death in 1916 was a tragedy to his family. His wife, with the support of Auntie and Uncles Nick and Mike, carried on as her husband would have done in giving the children, Carl and Irma, the best possible education. In her children she had her greatest happiness.

It was Doc and Sophia who gave me a forever remembered joy--a teddy bear dressed in handmade shirt, overalls and a straw hat. This treasure was presented during a trip to Marion. Doc Formanack drove there by horse and buggy a day or more each week to give dental service. Sophia often

drove with him and took me, a child of two or three, for company. They were dear, good people who gave me and many others much pleasure.

Carl Formanack, only son of George and Sophia, has practiced medicine since World War II in Syracuse, Nebraska. Irma, who was a navy nurse, married and has lived with her husband and two children in San Antonio. For many years Irma served as school nurse in that city.

HERMAN WAGENER

1889-195

Herman, the only son of Carl and Virginia, was undoubtedly the namesake of Carl's brother who appears frequently in old photographs. Hans, as he was known by most, lived his entire life in Parker, South Dakota, where he operated a drug store for many years. He held a number of elective and honorary offices,among them city councilman, mayor, member and chief of the city volunteer firemen. When Parker no longer had the services of a doctor, Hans, as druggist, took care of many situations usually calling for assistance from a doctor. For several years he served as State Inspector for Food and Drugs.

In his youth he earned the title "Hans, the Flying Dutchman" for his great pitching ability. Overuse of his throwing arm cut short a promising career in baseball. While at Northwestern University, he also played on the football team. Like his father, Hans was an avid hunter and sportsman.

By nature Hans was reserved in manner, slow and deliberate in action. It was not easy to break through that reserve, but once accomplished one enjoyed his conversation and companionship.

Otilla Wagener Merrigan

1892-1971

Otilla was a beautiful girl and woman and made an impressive appearance. She had a lovely soprano voice and had she cared to develop that talent further, may have become a professional. She was a perfectionist in everything she did. Her home was beautifully kept. When she found housekeeping inadequate for full use of her energies, she enrolled in a business college. She served one term as County Register of Deeds and then was employed by the Division State Bank Examiners. Her last years were spent with her niece Renee in Denver, Colorado. She is buried in the Catholic cemetery in Parker.

Philomena Wagener Allen

1893-1966

Philomena, the youngest of the Wageners, had her father's features and blond coloring. After the death of Aunt Virginia, Uncle Carl made his home with her. She was the homemaker, skilled as a cook and with her needle. She lived in Parker her entire lifetime with the exception of the few years in Sioux Fall. She was a true Parkerite--active in her church, the American Legion, and in local organizations. She was kind to the poor and elderly

and interested in all the relatives. Carl Formanack remembers the kindness of the Allens towards him as he was working his way through college. Philomena took great pride and had much pleasure in her adopted daughter Renee.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CHILDREN OF EUGENE KREMER

Edward Kremer
(1892-1945)

Edward fulfilled his role as the eldest in the family by becoming the one called upon in family emergencies. When help was needed, Ed came! As a young man he seemed fearless to the point of recklessness. He broke horses at home and on Uncle Alec's farm. He rode a motorcycle with complete abandon. He traveled by foot, train and car with littel thought for his personal safety. He worked as a meat cutter, as a salesman for the Cudahy Packing Company, and as a car salesman. The last position he held was as purchasing agent for the Atlantic-Pacific Company. He and Leo, with their wives and friends, enjoyed a number of happy years in Chicago where both had much success in their work. Ed passed away in 1945. He and his wife Lynn are buried in Calvary Cemetery in Austin, Minnesota.

Leo Kremer
(1893-1954)

Leo, for his entire lifetime, was the "busy" one and the dependable one. In early pictures, when he was no more than ten or twelve years old, he can be seen in white coat and cap in my father's meat market. Years after his death, a friend spoke of her memory of him as one always on the move, carrying through responsibilities he assumed for some associate or organization.

Leo attended the schools of Parker and on graduation from high school matriculated at Northwestern University Dental School from where he was graduated with honor in 1914. He began the practice of dentistry in Vermillion, South Dakota, and in 1918 entered the service of his country as a dental officer in the army with the rank of Captain. Upon his discharge, Leo entered practice in Chicago. He served the Chicago Dental Society as secretary, treasurer, president-elect, and as president in 1943-44. For his outstanding service he was rewarded by being elected 1st Vice-president of the American Dental Association. His last assignment was Chairman of the Council on Relief and, under his guidance, a goal of $100,000.00 was reached. He served the Northwestern Dental Alumni Association as its president. During World War II, Leo was consultant for procurement and assignment of the

6th Army Command where he served with distinction. He was a member of Delta Sigma Delta fraternity and of Omicron Kappa Upsilon honorary dental fraternity. Because he served dentistry with distinction and devotion Leo was elected to membership in the American College of Dentists and the Odontographic Society of Chicago. At his death a friend wrote: "Through his service to organized dentistry we as a profession have moved forward and those of us who counted him friend and counselor have had our lives enriched and made fuller." Leo gave luster and distinction to the name of Kremer. He was a dear brother.

Lawrence Kremer

(1894-1964)

Lawrence Nicholas Kremer was born in Parker, South Dakota. He attended school at Armour and Sioux Falls. As a young boy he demonstrated a special talent for getting others to do his work and to feel privileged to do so. His smile, enthusiasm and friendliness won him many friends.

Lawrence had a great desire to obtain a degree in medicine, but financial support was not available at the time. After a brief period at Creighton University, he left for employment in the office of the Wilson Packing Company in Natchez, Mississippi. While there he joined the National Guard and was called to duty in 1917-1918 at the Mexican Border. Later he went to officers' training camp and served as a training officer for troops in World War I. After his discharge from service, he served as Secretary of Chambers of Commerce in several cities, including Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Cora and Lawrence maintained a very gracious home. Cora's loyalty to Lawrence is difficult times is a memory that could serve all of us well. In their son and his children one can hope for a fruition of the great potential never fully realized by Lawrence in his lifetime.

Larry Kremer II, Lawrence and Cora's only son, lives in Dallas, Texas, with his wife Betty Jean McNabb and two of his children. He is advertising manager of the Dallas News. His oldest son Lawrence, with his wife and daughter Christine, lives in New Haven, where he is on the faculty of Yale Univeristy in the field of environmental studies.

Agnes Kremer Gotz

(1896-)

A more detailed biography of Agnes is given later. Her family comprises most of the latest generations of the family.

Sophia Kremer Madison

(1898-1957)

Pictures of Sophia as a child have much charm. She was pretty with a lovely smile which served her well through the years. Because she left school long before graduation, it was her personality rather than training that was her greatest asset when seeking employment. After her husband Bernie's health forced them to leave the farm, Sophia sought employment in Minneapolis where Bernie was in the Veterans' Hospital. She held several positions in women's dress shops where both her appearance and manner made her an effective floor manager.

During her last illness, friends who came to visit in the hospital were amazed at her ability to smile and engage in light-hearted conversation. I regard her death as a great tragedy in that, had she sought help earlier, she might be with us still. Like the Sophias before her, she was always ready to give help to her family and friends even at great cost to herself. She experienced much sadness, but like Ed was almost stoical in her behavior. To this day, my thoughts of her bring me deep sadness and regret.

Josephine Kremer

To tell my own story is to recount years of activity in classrooms: first, seven years in rural and elementary schools in South Dakota; next, eight years in teacher education at State College, Memidji, Minnesota; then, thirty years as Director of Elementary Education in Austin, Minnesota; and, finally, four years as Director of Student Teaching at the College of St. Teresa, Winona, Minnesota. During that time I had the good fortune to be active in a number of professional orgainzations which promoted educational interests of both teachers and students. I have also done some professional writing. Over the years I have had much satisfaction in associating with many wonderful people who have made my life rich and meaningful. In my retirement I hope to enjoy family and friends and find ways of returning to others a few of the many joys I have received.

AGNES MARGUERITE KREMER GOTZ

To tell the story of Agnes Dremer Gotz is in many ways to repeat what has been said of Grandmother Wagner and Agnes' mother, Elizabeth Wagner Kremer. All were attractive women. Agnes was an especially pretty little girl, a good looking young woman, lovely mother and grandmother. All loved pretty clothes and wore them well. All maintained well ordered homes, were excellent cooks and seamstresses, and were devoted to their families and their church.

As a school girl, Agnes was particularly interested in art and told again and again of a picture she had painted which won a prize and was to have been my mother's Christmas gift. In some strange manner the picture disappeared from the church Christmas tree, and mother never received this prize offering. Agnes also excelled in oratory and dramatics, winning prizes and contests in those areas.

Her artistic ability has always been apparent in her home, which she can make attractive with little or much. It has also made her famous everywhere she lived for her beautifully set tables and exquisitely prepared food. Her talents have been asked for and appreciated for dinners for visiting bishops, involving several hundreds, and lunches for two or three sisters at her children's yearly school picnics. Her family affectionately teases her about her "picnics," which involve all the amenities of the finest restaurants--tablecloth, silver, serving dishes, and never a jar on the table!

Her gifts with materials and sewing machine still provide beautiful clothes for one of her daughters and charming gifts for grandchildren, as well as alterations for others. She is enormously creative and can adjust an inch here or there to make a fit better or a line more graceful, just as she adjusts recipes to provide intriguing and unique taste experiences.

Her ability to have fun tends to help others have a good time; her enthusiasm for going and doing has made her a lively, interesting person. All of her life she has been a card enthusiast and an avid sports fan, with special loyalties to Notre Dame, the Green Bay Packers and the Yankees.

Her fortitude in bearing life's burdens, particularly the loss of her son James at twelve years of age, has been remarkable. The patience,

faith and understanding she developed have given her a sensitivity to the sufferings of others, who frequently turn to her in times of trouble or sorrow. Her Catholic faith has been a sustaining power in her life. She has been generous in its service--to her parishes, to the schools her children attended, to the missions, to Brother Paul's derelicts, to the Antoine Guild of Good Counsel Cancer Home.

Her family has moved frequently, but wherever they have gone, Agnes has established a home quickly and made it a pleasant and happy place for her family and their friends. Like her mother before her, no sacrifice has ever been too great if it was for the betterment or happiness of the family.

Edward Olinger

(-)

Edward Olinger, oldest son of Justine Kremer and Henry Olinger, lived his entire life in the community of Emery, South Dakota. He was a progressive farmer and active community worker.

Several of his sons and daughters followed their father's interest. Anthony, the youngest, maintains a large and successful dairy farm. Wilfred is an instructor in vocational agriculture at the Area Vocational School at Albert Lea, Minnesota. Rosella, for a period of years, operated a successful chicken and egg business on her husband's farm.

MATERNAL BRANCH

ANNA DORA SPONE WAGNER

1834 - 1910

Anna Dora Spone was the daughter of Carl Spone, a teacher in Berlin or a nearby village, whose work was preparing boys for entrance into the more advanced schools in Berlin. He must have been an excellent linguist since he read and spoke seven languages. Anna Dora had one sister, Josephine, who came to America for a brief period but returned to Germany.

It is unclear what work Anna Dora carried on as a young woman. She had received training in tailoring and became an expert seamstress. She had the traditional German passion for orderliness and cleanliness. She served in the home of a wealthy family as a maid, governess or seamstress. Through this experience she acquired a fondness for a life style to which she adhered through many adversities. The niceties of life were important to her. All of her life she wanted to maintain a good appearance and did so. As an elderly lady she took great pride and pleasure in displaying dresses which she had made and worn in earlier years. Her granddaughters, Agnes and Sylvia, who had been with grandmother on some of these occasions, described the beauty and richness of style and the genuine artistry of the stitching and finishing. For several years Sylvia had in her possession some of these dresses, then destroyed them. They only took room! Let this be a consideration for later generations.

My own mother often repeated to me her mother's advice: "Even when you live alone always take time to prepare a good meal and arrange your table carefully and attractively." She believed that life was to be lived graciously and did as much as she could to make it so. Crudeness in any form was offensive to her.

Her father was displeased with her marriage to Carl Wagner. When Carl wished to leave Germany to avoid further military service, the father told her daughter that he would care for her and her children if she would permit her husband to leave the country without her. When she refused, she was asked to send word when she arrived in America, but never to expect to hear from home again. This is one explanation for the scant information on grandmother's home life.

The family, Carl and Anna Dora with their children Hannah, Charles

and Elizabeth, arrived in New York in 1868. They settled briefly in Hoosey Corners, N.Y., and then moved to Shamokin, Pennsylvania. There the children attended a Catholic parochial school. The father had been taught shoemaking while in the army and, during the time spent in Shamokin, made shoes for the miners. During a long strike, the miners were unable to pay their bills and it became necessary to make a change in occupation and location. Grandfather Carl Wagner had come from farming people in Germany and now decided to go West and establish a home in the country that had cheap land for sale.

During the years in Shamokin, the father had urged his oldest daughter Hannah to marry a Mr. Willoughby, a gentleman of some means. It was Mr. Willoughby who advanced capital to grandfather for the purchase of land in South Dakota.

There is uncertainty about the date the family came to South Dakota, very probably about 1880. The trip was made by train to Yankton, with a day's stopover at Dubuque, Iowa, to permit the family to attend Mass on Sunday. There was a strong attachment to the Catholic faith in this family. One of grandfather's brothers had studied for the priesthood; it is not known if he was ordained. Mother told of the practice in her home of night prayers when the father, in a loud voice heard throughout the house, led the family in prayer as he and they prepared for bed.

On arriving in Yankton, the family with their belongings were transported by oxen to Swan Lake, some thirty miles from Parker, where the family spent the winter in a sod house. Mother described the way in which grandmother tried to keep the house clean and presentable by hanging sheets over the sod walls.

The first year's crops were good. The new land was productive. Grandfather brought carpenters, probably from Yankton or Parker, to construct needed buildings. On the completion of their work, grandfather took them back to their homes. While he was gone a prairie fire destroyed everything but the house. Great as was this discouragement, the family made a new beginning in a fine farming area three miles north of Lesterville, South Dakota. All seemed to be going well until grandfather passed away from pneumonia in 1893. After his death, a banker who held a mortgage on the land asked for the papers from Alec, mother's young brother, who was attempting to manage the

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ELIZABETH CATHERINE WAGNER KREMER

1868 - 1952

Much of mother's story is told in the account of her family in a previous chapter. This is as it should be, for her life style and goals were those of her mother whom she revered all of her days.

In the first years the family lived in Dakota, life must have been extremely simple and perhaps difficult. Never did I hear mother speak of difficulties, but rather of such pleasures as roaming over the countryside with her brother and discovering an unexpected stream or grassy ravine. Her formal education had been completed during the years spent in Shamokin, but she had a lifetime interest in reading and a remarkably retentive memory.

She could not have been more than fifteen or sixteen when she went to Yankton to work as a maid in a home where the family showed much appreciation for her excellent cooking and housekeeping. With the first money she earned she bought dress material for her mother and a doll for a young sister, Clara. The doll had a wax head and was ruined when left outside in the sunshine--a long remembered tragedy.

Later mother worked for a family in Parker, S.D., who wanted her to accompany them to California where they moved to make their permanent home. She wanted to go but did not as she thought her mother needed her. It was while she was working in Parker that she met and married Eugene Kremer in 1892.

For the remainder of her life she devoted herself completely to her family. As long as her mother lived she attempted to give her every possible assistance. She had much interest in the welfare of her sister, Amelia (Aunt Minnie) and her family. It was a tragic blow to my mother when Auntie Minnie passed away at the early age of 38 in 1912. Years earlier mother had another great loss in the death of a sister Mary, much beloved, for whom she had cared during a long illness.

Mother was ambitious for her family, wanted them educated and, with my father, was willing to make any sacrifice to accomplish this goal.

She was an excellent seamstress, cook, and housekeeper. She loved pretty clothes, wore them well, and made her children proud of her appearance. She carried herself with grace and dignity. She was soft spo-

ken and gentle. Like her mother, she found crudeness in behavior most objectionable. Her small granddaughter Christine, at three or four, described her very well when she said, "My grandmother Kremer is a lady."

It is now twenty-two years since her death and my loneliness for her has never diminished. Memories of the happy days we spent in our home in Austin from 1939-1952 are cherished. She had time in that interval to savor some well earned pleasure in visits to and from her children and was free to a considerable degree from household cares (she insisted on preparing one good meal a day for me), with time for her rosary and prayerbook. She read as long as sight permitted her to do so.

In conversations I was struck by the depth of her insights and said to her one day, almost in awe, "Mother, how did you become so wise?" In her quiet, modest manner, she was a tower of strength and wisdom.

> Who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also and he praiseth her. A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.
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> PROVERBS 31

MATTHIAS KREMER FAMILY

MATTHIAS
(1865-1958)

Matthias Kremer was born in Germany and emigrated to America with his parents, Mary Radl Kremer and Adam Kremer, who settled on a farm near Lesterville, South Dakota. The family of eight children lived in or near that town for most of their lives. They all exemplified the sturdiness of their German heritage; they were busy, hard-working people. Matthias was a carpenter who, even in his retirement, continued his trade in a small shop back of his home. He served as city constable for a number of years. As an old man in his nineties he was alert mentally and enjoyed good health. The editor of the Yankton city newspaper interviewed him a few years before his death and Matthias was able to give an interesting account of his life and his home territory. He is buried in the Catholic cemetery in Lesterville.

AMELIA
(1875-1913)

Amelia was my mother's "little sister" for whom she always had great affection and concern. Both of them married Kremers who were unrelated but whose surnames had identical spellings. Amelia married at sixteen or seventeen and from that time was a busy person with housework and children. Income from carpentry was limited, partly because the work was so dependent on weather conditions. Amelia (Aunt Minnie) accepted life as it came. She was cheerful, uncomplaining, generous with what she had, and warm in her relationships. Everyone loved Aunt Minnie. In appearance and manner she was a beautiful person. Like her mother before,her, she maintained a well kept home and made her children's welfare her great concern. Her early death from pernicious anemia brought great sadness to all who knew her. She is buried in the family lot in the Catholic cemetery at Lesterville.

WILLIAM
(1894-1973)

William, the oldest child in the family, followed his father's trade of carpentry. For many years he traveled across the country in the employ of construction firms. He was a master craftsman in window stripping.

No one surpassed Bill in his ability to contact relatives in all parts of the country. He visited Dr. Kowalski in Pennsylvania, Uncle Alec and Uncle Charley. He was an occasional visitor in our homes in Centerville and Austin, and in the Gotz home in Minneapolis. Often, if a knock was heard at the door when no visitors were expected, someone would say, "Perhaps it's Bill Kremer," and often it was. We were always glad to see him for he was great fun with his stories and unfailing good humor. He had a special ability to fit in any group, and was a most helpful person. He danced beautifully all his life and in his sixties and seventies was a prized partner.

Bill was a roamer, but sooner or later his travels turned homeward. He spoke frequently of his hope and plan to return to Lesterville to spend his later years with Sylvia. This he did, although he chose to spend the coldest of the winter months in Yankton where he lived in a hotel. He was an avid baseball fan andspent hours with his radio and TV. He suffered a fatal accident with his car in December, 1974, shortly before his eightieth birthday. He is buried in the cemetery at Lesterville.

SYLVIA

(1896-)

Sylvia Kremer was the third child of Amelia and Matthias Kremer. Pictures of Amelia taken as a young girl show a striking resemblance to her daughter Sylvia. Aunt Minnie's (Amelia's) character and personality are revealed in pictures of her as a young woman; a sweet gentleness and dignity are in every portrait.

Sylvia, who was but sixteen years old at the time of her mother's death, assumed her mother's role in the family. She managed the home as her mother had done; she became a source of comfort and strength to her father, who lived to be ninety-three, and to her brothers William, Earl, and Lawrence for as long as they lived. Through difficult and sad times she never lost her sense of humor or her characteristic spirit of optimism. As a young girl she was a beautiful dancer and enjoyed much popularity, for she had a talent for bringing good fun and gaiety to any group.

Her education was limited to the years spent in the public schools of Lesterville. She continued her education as an adult through thoughtful

reading and discussion. She is an interesting conversationalist with ability to defendhher convictions.

In her home town of Lesterville, where she has spent her entire life, she is a widely respected and much loved person. Her thoughtfulness and unselfishness to family and friends have won for her this high regard, and many warm friendships. She served as a postal clerk and later as assistant postmistress for a quarter of a century. In her parish church and Home Extension Club she has been an active participant.

At seventy-eight, she continues her beautiful handiwork, in particular, the making of handsome quilted spreads. On many occasions in past years. she visited in our homes, an always welcome and most helpful visitor. She has always been and continues to be an independent, self-sufficient person from whom life has demanded much in sacrifice and courage. Perhaps the finest tribute that can be paid her is that she has always exemplified the qualities and character of her mother.

EARL

(1900-1963)

From boyhood Earl was a driving, ambitious, energetic fellow, bright, articulate, aggressive, with a personality that won friends. He began his career as a typesetter and linotypist. He was editor and owner of a newspaper at Lesterville and a partner in a printing business in Sioux City. During the last years of his life, he worked with an equipment company that capitalized on his inventions. He was very successful in business because of his total commitment to his work. He enjoyed his family and took great pride in his home. His early death at sixty-three could be attributed in part to his relentless ambition. It was not a selfish ambition; he was always deeply concerned about the welfare of his family and was always mindful of all that Sylvia had done to maintain the family home.

LAWRENCE

(1906-1955)

Lawrence was but seven years old at the death of his mother and Sylvia became a second mother to him. In some ways, his personality matched that of his brother Bill; he had a way of taking life less seriously than Earl, with more time for fun and friends. As a young man he used his musical talent for both pleasure and profit as saxaphonist in dance bands. Later he be-

came a skillful linotypist. He had gained proficiency in this trade through association with his brother Earl. His death at age forty-nine from heart failure was a great shock to his family. Lawrence had always been so full of zest for living.

GOTZ FAMILY

FOURTH GENERATION

WILLIAM GOTZ

(1903-1977)

Assen, Netherlands, was the birthplace of William Gotz who, with his parents, older brothers and sisters came to Rock Valley, Iowa, on April 16, 1907. They had left from Rotterdam and come to Iowa via New York City. Very shortly after arrival, they established a new home in Sioux Center, Iowa, a thriving community whose population was almost entirely of Dutch origin.

His father, Adrianus Gotz, had learned the meat trade through an apprenticeship in Holland and now established a successful business in Sioux Center which he operated from 1907 to about 1940. Bill and his brothers Jim, John and Fred all had their years of apprenticeship in their father's market. This meant that each boy at the age of ten or twelve began to learn the trade, through menial tasks at first, but eventually as full time operators with their father. Bill remembers standing on a prune box to reach the work bench in his first efforts to trim meat. He probably insisted on having a chance to do this job, a man's work, of course.

In 1921 he decided that he wanted greater independence in his work and looked for employment outside of Sioux Center. He found it with the Centerville, South Dakota Meat Company which my father managed. Bill was invited to have his meals with our family and there met his future wife Agnes. Her sons James and Richard were small boys at that time and they became fond of Bill and he of them. They were fortunate in acquiring this kind and generous new father.

Later Bill and my father were associated in the business at Beresford, South Dakota. In 1931 Bill went to work for the O.P. Skaggs Company in Omaha, Nebraska. In the years which followed he held positions in Sioux City; Manson, Iowa; Sioux Falls; Sheldon, Iowa; Rapid City, South Dakota; Menno; Minneapolis; River Falls and Ellsworth, Wisconsin. He acquired a reputation as a highly knowledgeable and efficient tradesman. His son, Bill, who worked with him, said of his father, "He is a master of his trade."

After an illness in 1972 Bill retired and with Agnes moved to St. Paul. His retirement should be a happy time for him; he has the admiration and af-

fection of his family and enjoys a circle of loyal friends. He has great interest in the Knights of Columbus and has served in a number of offices, including two terms as Grand Knight of the River Falls Council. His loyalty to the K.C.'s has been matched by his participation in the AFL Meat Cutters' Union which he helped to organize and in which he served as president of the Sioux Falls Council.

Bill has always expressed great admiration for his mother whose way of life, he said, exemplified the truly Christian woman--kind, modest, charitable in thought and deed. As a young woman his mother had been a champion skater in her home district. Her family lineage was remotely connected to that of the royal family.

A sister of Closina Smeenk Gotz (Bill's mother) lived for many years in Rock Valley, Iowa. Her married name is Hubeling. Her brother John lived near Canton, South Dakota, and another brother, Peter, was in Denver, Colorado.

The father of Adrianus Gotz had been a government postal employee. A brother Frederick served as an army officer and another brother Seegar was in the grocery business. They remained in the Netherlands. Closina Smeenk Gotz is buried in Sioux Center, Iowa, and Adrianus in California.

In 1976 Bill suffered a serious heart attack from which, however, he made a remarkable recovery. The careful nursing and companionship of his wife speeded his return to fairly good health and he enjoyed many happy hours of bridge and visiting. On January 11, 1977, he was struck again very suddenly while enjoying a lunch of homemade soup and a joke with Agnes. Although the paramedics once again restored his breathing, he never regained consciousness and died on January 20. According to his wishes, he was cremated and his ashes buried in the family plot in Centerville, South Dakota.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CHILDREN OF WILLIAM AND AGNES GOTZ

Richard C. Gotz

After serving in the Air Force in World War II as a test pilot, Dick attended Notre Dame Univeristy where he earned a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. Since his graduation he has worked as a structural analyst with Boeing Aircraft of Seattle, Washington. He and his wife Beverly, a graduate of St. Catherine's College, and their seven children have been active in the affairs of their church and parochial schools and with junior soccer in the Seattle area.

Robert Eugene Gotz

Bob was a star athlete in basketball and football at Cathedral High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and was a member of basketball teams in the Air Force with which he served in World War II. He followed his father's trade and has worked as meat cutter and manager of the meat department of several chain stores. Like his father he has been active in the affiars of the Meat Cutters' Union. Bob, his wife Jeanne Peters, and their nine children have been especially interested in art. Among their many projects have been a Japanese garden in their backyard and settings for the Dayton's Christmas display of Dickens' Christmas Carol.

Mary Elizabeth Gotz

Mary has been a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph since 1949. For ten years she taught elementary school in St. Paul. After receiving a Master's Degree in English from the University of Notre Dame, she taught that subject in secondary schools in North Dakota and Minnesota. At present she is on the faculty at Derham Hall High School in St. Paul.

Marguerite Ann Gotz

After graduation from the University of Wisconsin at River Falls, Mimi taught English in Wyoming and Minnesota. She married Dr. John Tooley, a research physicist, and has four boys. For a number of years, while Dr. Tooley was employed by Texas Instruments, they lived in Dallas, Austin and Houston, Texas. Presently they reside in Evansville, Indiana, where Dr. Tooley is Dean of the Engineering Department at the University of Evansville.

William Michael Gotz

Bill, artist and teacher, attended Wisconsin University at River Falls, St. John's University, St. Thomas College (where he received a Master's Degree in Education), and Mankato State College. Since 1963 he has devoted himself to the arts of raising children, making pots and teaching art. With his wife Lucy Peters and his four children he lives in Austin, Minnesota. All of them are ardent campers and lovers of the out-of-doors and living things.

Jerome Paul Gotz

Jerry was a star athlete in football and basketball in high school and college in River Falls, Wisconsin, and later in the Air Force, in which he enlisted. In the service he received training as a psychiatric worker, which may account for his interest in working with homeless and delinquent boys and social services. He is presently employed by Ramsey County Welfare in St. Paul. His wife, Betty Murphy, is Director of Food Services at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park. With their two children they make their home in St. Paul and pursue hobbies of antique collecting and interior decoration and remodeling.